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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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REPORT NO. [redacted]

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COUNTRY Palestine

SUBJECT Arab Forces in Southern Palestine

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO. [redacted]

[redacted]

1. Headquarters for Arab forces in the southern area of Palestine (Bethlehem and Hebron) appears to be at Beit Jala, at the Mt. Everest Hotel. Major Lockett, British officer who formerly commanded troops in the Latrun area, is in charge of Arab Legion troops, such units of the Egyptian forces as still remain in that area, and the irregulars. He is assisted by Captain Terry Spring and another British officer.

2. The southernmost point under the jurisdiction of the Arab Legion is Dhabiriya, south of Hebron. Tarqumiya and Dura, west of Hebron, are under the control of the Legion, and three Egyptian platoons stationed at Idna are also subject to Legion orders.

3. The following is fragmentary information which has been reported on Arab Legion officers and units:

   a. Major Muhammad Bey Mo'aita has relieved Lieutenant Colonel 'Abdullah Tel, Military Governor of Arab controlled Jerusalem, as Commanding Officer of the 6 Mechanized Regiment.

   b. Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Bey Hashim has replaced 'Ali Bey as Commanding Officer of the 5 Mechanized Regiment. 'Ali Bey is now in England attending a special course.

   c. Major Karim Bey Ohan, formerly with the 5 Mechanized Regiment immediately under 'Ali Bey, has now been transferred to a staff job with the 1 Brigade. Source states that his immediate superior seems to be Colonel Blackton, who, in addition to commanding the 1 Mechanized Regiment, also serves as Deputy to Colonel Goldie.

   d. Captain Muhammad Russan serves as Adjutant of the 3 Brigade (Latrun area). He is a young man who appears to be an aggressive officer, and who belongs to one of the most prominent Transjordanian families, from Irbid.

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Of the above officers, Tel, Mo'aita, Hashim and Ohan were present at the meetings held at the Government House on 28 and 30 November 1948 between Arab and Jewish commanders. At the second meeting, Russan was also present, in connection with the use of the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem direct road.

4. Source reports that Arab military men were concerned over the possibility that, in addition to small weapons, the following equipment held by Egyptian troops in the Faluja pocket might fall into Israeli hands:

four 25-pounders
six 4.5 inch (not specified whether guns or howitzers)
nine 6-pounders

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